

LEAGUE OF THE SOUTH

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League of the South statement on Charlottesville

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by Michael Hill, © August 23, 2017

23 August 2017

The League of the South went to Charlottesville, Virginia, on Saturday, 12 August 2017, for two main reasons: to spread our nearly quarter-century old message of Southern nationalism and independence and to stand with our allies on the right in defense of the memory of one of our heroes: General Robert E. Lee. It was to Lee Park (renamed Emancipation Park by the city's leftist government) we went to protest the removal of Lee's statue.

I received an invitation to speak at this event and for The League to be one of the participating organizations from the man who organized what was called the Unite the Right! rally, Jason Kessler of Charlottesville. Kessler, as organizer, had secured a permit from the city to have the event at Lee Park.

For several months we helped publicize the event on our website and social media. We also encouraged our members to attend what was shaping up to be a large gathering of right-wing groups in a show of solidarity in defense of our Southern inheritance. Knowing the violent history of Antifa (Anti-Fascist Action) and Black Lives Matter (BLM), both who promised to be there to oppose us, we encouraged our members and supporters to come with defensive gear such as riot shields (a dozen of which we provided), helmets, sturdy footwear, eye protection, etc. We also provided information regarding Virginia's gun and knife laws, and allowed our members to make up their own minds if they would arm themselves or not. In the end, we discouraged both long guns and knives, leaving open the option of concealed (with valid permit) or open carry of handguns. Most of our members chose not to bring any firearms or knives, having only legal pepper spray and flag poles (with flags attached) as potential "weapons." Our people carried with them NO objects that were intended to be thrown at the leftist protestors. Thus, we came ready to defend ourselves and our property but not to carry out any aggressive/offensive actions. We would respond but not initiate.

About a week before the event itself, we issued a formal statement on our website and social media outlets entitled "A Statement on Legal Matters regarding The League of the South's Participation in the Unite the Right Rally" (see www.leagueofthesouth.com 7 August 2017 for text). In this publication we laid out our expectations of how our members should behave at the event.

Only a few days before the Unite the Right rally was to be held, the Charlottesville's city council decided to withdraw Mr. Kessler's permit for Lee (Emancipation) Park and instead give him one for McIntire Park, a few miles away from the focus of our event: the statue of General Lee. Kessler refused to be moved, and a suit was filed to reinstate the original permit. Only about 24 hours before the rally a federal judge sided with Kessler and reinstated the original permit. The way to Lee Park was legally open to us.

We did not participate in any of the "torchlight" activities on the Friday evening before the actual rally. Rather, on Friday we scouted out the park and the area in which we planned to park our vehicles. When we had decided to participate as an organization in the rally, I then appointed one of our members to plan for our safe entry and exit from Lee Park. I asked him to establish contact with the Charlottesville Police Department and the Virginia State Police, which he did. Through him, we let it be known to law enforcement that we would be arriving in the downtown area around 10 a.m. Saturday at one of two parking garages: East Market Street or Water Street. On Friday, we decided that the East Market Street garage was the one we would use since it was immediately adjacent to the city police headquarters (vehicle safety was a concern because we had heard that Antifa had slashed tires on Friday night).

As we made our plans for the rally, we conferred with other right-wing groups, especially the ones in the newly formed loose alliance known as the Nationalist Front. They liked our plan for entry, a walking route to the park, and exit; also there was safety in numbers. Thus they agreed to meet us at a pre-planned location and caravan downtown to the East Market Street garage on Saturday morning.



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We arrived at the East Market Street garage somewhere between 9:30 and 10:00 am. on Saturday. Once there, we organized by groups and gave final instructions for proceeding in good order the three blocks to Lee Park via East Market Street. The mood during the march was upbeat. All our women and children were stationed well inside the marching column in places of safety. The League of the South contingent led the way.

Once we were within sight of Lee Park it became apparent to us that there was no law enforcement presence between us and our destination. What we did see was a huge crowd of Antifa, BLM, and allies barring our way into Lee Park. This group was armed with various chemical sprays and gels, sticks, bottles filled with various liquids ranging from urine to caustic materials such as hydrochloric acid, rocks, and a surprise or two in store for us.

We stopped our column about within about thirty feet of the protestors' front line in order to determine their intentions. We were on a public thoroughfare (which was barred at the time to vehicular traffic) headed to a public park for which our group had a federal court-mandated permit to assemble and give speeches, beginning at noon. The leftist protesters signaled their intentions by locking arms and taunting us about coming through them to get to our destination. In response, our leaders called for our shield bearers to come forward and to push our way through the hostile crowd, up the steps off East Market Street, and into Lee Park. And we did so.

After a few minutes of physical confrontation, we managed to secure a reasonably safe route into Lee Park for the greater part of our column, held on the edges by our shield bearers, who did excellent work in warding off Antifa and BLM physical assaults. Once everyone in our group was safely in the park, our front line men took a position on the park steps and stayed there for the duration of our time at the abortive rally.

Perhaps the most important thing we did once in the park is to have rescued individuals and small groups of late-comers to the rally who were under heavy assault by Antifa and BLM. Several times we dispatched our shield bearers and others into a hostile crowd to accomplish these missions.

We had not been in Lee Park for more than a few minutes when the leftist protesters began throwing objects at us. At least two of our men suffered burns from what our medical staff determined was some sort of acid. Others were doused with various chemical agents (mainly pepper gel diluted with water) delivered in plastic bottles with loosened caps. Neither League members nor members of any other group with us initiated any throwing of objects at the leftist protesters; our people picked up objects thrown at them and, when possible, threw them back at the protestors. Again, we brought no objects into the park that were designed to be used as missiles or projectiles against those who opposed us.

Lee Park had been cordoned off by police barricades in such a way that one-half of the area was limited only to law enforcement. The other half, running along East Market Street, was left for rally attendees. That half was further divided into two "pens." The pen farthest to the west was full when we arrived, the attendees having been escorted in after their roughly two mile trek from their staging point at McIntire Park. Most law enforcement assets were stationed from the middle of the park back to the west, thus giving the most protection to the western-most pen. The pen we moved in to on the southeastern quadrant of the park was mostly devoid of law enforcement. Moreover, the entry passage up the steps there was an open gap we had to constantly guard against incursion by the leftists. The League's shield bearers were stationed here for the duration.

In the northern half of Lee Park, unknown to us at the time, there were stationed squads of heavily-armed riot police. We would soon find out the meaning of their presence.

From the time we arrived at Lee Park around 10 a.m. until about 11:40 a.m., there were sporadic confrontations around the steps we occupied and desultory "missile fire" back and forth. One large black protester was caught on film with a primitive "flamethrower"—an aerosol can and a lighter—shooting flames toward a man holding a Confederate battle flag. But at around 11:40, someone in the leftist crowd on East Market Street introduced a surprise weapon: tear gas canisters. Tear gas, though used by law enforcement agencies in the US and elsewhere, was outlawed as a weapon of war in 1993. Within five minutes, we counted three tear gas canisters that were thrown into our area. The question is: how did the leftist protesters get their hands on tear gas? It is not something readily available on the civilian open market. That leaves two reasonable options: 1) it was stolen from some official store; or 2) it was given to the leftist protesters by some official agency.

Though the wind dispersed the tear gas fairly rapidly, it was at that time that the law enforcement oversight officials made the call that they had a "riot" on their hands and thus an "illegal assembly." This was only minutes before the speakers—including two League of the South members—were to take the podium. How convenient that the tear gas just happened to be in the hands of the leftist protesters.

Not only had local officials now determined that our gathering at Lee Park was an illegal assembly, but Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe had declared an official "State of Emergency" in Charlottesville, making even small groups of people in public illegal. In response, riot police began sweeping across the park, driving all our people from both "pens" out onto East Market Street and into the crowd of Antifa and BLM that they had decided not to disperse. This made it necessary to fight our way out of the park in both directions (east to the parking garage and much farther westward to McIntire Park).

By such actions, the riot squads had forced our members to divide into small groups and make their way to safety as best they could. There is graphic video footage of running skirmishes as our people tried to get back to their vehicles while being hounded by Antifa and a growing presence from hostile young black males armed with bats and clubs. Video clearly shows that the main goal of our members was to get out of the danger zone as quickly as possible. At no point along the escape routes did our people initiate physical contact with those following and harassing us. All confrontations, according to the available video evidence, were initiated by leftist protesters against our people. Our response was, when necessary, to fight back with enough force to stop the threat.

With our people so widely dispersed and some cell service out, it became necessary to send out rescue vehicles to track them down and give them rides back to the parking garage and other parking areas near Lee Park. Our drivers and their guards did a tremendous job amidst a very dangerous situation (i.e. Antifa and BLM were in the

streets impeding the flow of traffic for several blocks around Lee Park). By mid-afternoon, all our members were accounted for and we headed back to our base camp.

It soon became clear to us that everything had been a set up. The local and State authorities had obviously ordered law enforcement to "stand down," thus allowing the violent protestors to start a riot and shut us down before the actual rally ever got underway. By doing so, they created an extremely dangerous situation for people who had come to attend a legal gathering in a public venue.

The elite media response was predictable: blame everything on "neo-Nazis and the KKK." The only problem with this narrative is that it was not true; among the hundreds of people there in support of keeping the Lee statue up there were very few visible Klansmen or neo-Nazis. Most rather were members of various nationalist groups (we, of course, represented the Southern nationalist element) and members of the nebulous Alt-Right.

Again, speaking solely for The League of the South, we were there to promote Southern nationalism and to defend the Lee statue at a legally-recognized rally in a public park. We approached that venue on a public thoroughfare that was open to foot traffic and were denied entrance into the public park by a hostile group that refused to allow us free passage. Upon seeing their intentions, we forced our way through and into the park. Upon being summarily dismissed from the park a short time later, we did the same on the return journey to our automobiles. We were not the cause of the disturbance. We merely defended ourselves from attack. All in all, we acquitted ourselves like men and let the opposition know they we would firmly exert our right to free assembly and free speech on the lands bequeathed us by our noble forebears.

I have never been prouder of our members than when I witnessed the courage, determination, and love for our cause and for each other that they displayed on that day. I was proud to stand with them. They are the bravest of the brave and a credit to their ancestors' blood coursing through their veins. Victory is won by men and women such as these. May God indeed grant us that victory, and may Charlottesville be the first step towards our liberation from the new Red Terror that is sweeping our land.

Michael Hill, President, The League of the South

(Note: We are in the process of doing after-action assessments, the results of which will remain an internal matter to be used by us and our allies in the next public event in which we participate.)

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